

Sias says KSU is on move

President marks
two years in job

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On the second anniversary of her coming to Kentucky State University, President Mary Evans Sias took a moment to reflect on the past years' accomplishments and the "soul" of the university.

"Education does not exist for its own sake," Sias said Friday at the board of regents meeting. "It exists to train, enlighten and enliven our spirits ... As we teach our students and show them how to learn, to serve and to integrate knowledge, they become the soul of the university. The students are who we are here for."

At the March 30 budget planning session, faculty regent Tucker Landy quoted an article that said universities no longer educate, merely serve students with numerous programs.

Sias said that discussion got her thinking about the soul of KSU.

Speaking directly to the students in the audience at several points, Sias said the university

See **SIAS**, A14

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Sias marks two years as KSU president, hails progress

(Continued from Page A1)

needs to educate students, but also to prepare them for all aspects of living in the world, including serving their communities. She said if students could not tell people what they learned while at KSU, the university is doing something wrong.

She quoted an article by incoming Interim Harvard University President Derek Bok, who said there should not be just one goal of higher education and the purpose should not be limited to intellectual development.

Students need to learn how to communicate, think, live with diversity, compete in a global society, prepare for a career, develop broad interests, build character and be responsible citizens, Bok said in his article.

"All of these things are critical for when you walk out of here," Sias said to the students in the front row.

While her last two years have gone by quickly, they have been productive, Sias said. She challenged the faculty, staff, board and students to continue working together to better the school. She also cautioned them not to be resistant to change.

"It is easy for us to follow the conventional path, but we must work to go beyond what we have always done if we are to enhance student learning," Sias said.

She cited student housing, student life and building better programs as goals for the future as well as growing enrollment, graduating more students and increasing retention rates.

KSU already increased its fall



Sias

applications by 3.9 percent and transfer applications 31.1 percent. Applications from Kentucky students are up 50.4 percent and freshman applications rose 2.6 percent.

Last year, applications were up more than 200 percent, with freshman applications alone jumping from 1,366 in 2004 to 4,106 in 2005.

Since then, KSU has actively pursued Kentucky students through a series of programs and school visits. The university also entered into an agreement Jan. 13 with Bluegrass Community and Technical College to allow BCTCS students to transfer seamlessly to KSU.

The two schools identified that transfer students needed more financial aid, counseling and

information about the benefits of a four-year degree rather than stopping college after receiving an associate's degree, and crafted a partnership around it.

The agreement will allow community college students to be more involved in campus life through KSU extracurriculars and sporting events and help KSU grow its enrollment and better serve its students.

KSU faculty may begin teaching on BCTCS' Anderson County campus to allow community college students to work toward a four-year degree or even a master's degree without switching to the Frankfort campus.

In addition to higher application numbers, KSU has admitted 1,541 students this year compared to last year's 975.

"That means we are getting more qualified students earlier in the game," Sias said.

It also has a 58.6 percent retention rate, an improvement, but not high enough, Sias said.

While more students enroll

each year, many students take a year off to work to raise more money for tuition, Sias said in her August State of the University speech. Sometimes they do not return to the university.

Therefore, the university needs to focus on making the university run as efficiently as possible, secure more funding and increase scholarship donations, Sias said.

The university has already raised \$806,017 this year in philanthropic support and secured state funding for renovating Hathaway Hall, more base funding and library resource support. However, Gov. Ernie Fletcher removed \$4.9 million to improve the KSU nursing building.

Sias said she was not happy about that loss, especially since both Fletcher and his wife, Glenn Fletcher, have health-care backgrounds and understand "how vitally important it is to the commonwealth."

The nursing program consistently has better than a 93 percent pass rate on state and national

board examinations for the last few years and the graduates often serve in the state's neediest areas, Sias said. Plus, the program recently passed all seven parts of its accreditation. It will hear in July whether it will be accredited.

"All is not lost," Sias said. "We still plan to go forth and push to get a nursing school."

In other business, the regents:

- Approved the new online tuition rates for graduates and undergraduates and graduate tuition and fee rates.

Undergraduates will pay a total of \$240 per credit hour – \$225 for the course and \$15 for the delivery fee.

Graduates will pay a flat fee of \$300 per credit hour for online courses.

For tuition and fees, in-state graduates will pay \$300 per credit hours and nonresident graduate students will pay \$700 per credit hour.

- Announced the board is expected to approve its final audit report in July.